

War of Great Chinese Tongs, Starting Here, Spreads Swiftly Over Coast.



Lew Quan Con, Hop Sing and Four Families Tong, sought as the killer.



Bing Kong Tong headquarters, 337 1/2 Adablasa Street.



Lillie Lem Lee, the woman in the case.



William Chew (left) and Chen Sing, Hop Sing Tong Men, under arrest.



Hop Sing Tong headquarters 520 1/2 North Los Angeles Street

ly companions of the Bing Kong man was considered cause enough that they also should be shot.
 Such is the story of the Four Families tong.
 But the Bing Kongs laugh at it. They assert that a fake lottery game caused the trouble. Here is their story:
 "Though Bing Kong men did not conduct the lottery game, a few Bing Kong members held stock in the lottery company. The drawing was a fraud and the manager refused to pay. The Four Families man who won the prize ticket appealed to the Chinese Chamber of

Commerce. A \$4000 settlement was agreed upon, to be paid by the company to the Four Families man though the Bing Kong stockholders objected. But the Four Families man disregarded the agreement and demanded an additional \$1500. This also was finally paid.
GO ON WARPATH.
 "Because the Bing Kong stockholders, individuals and not representing the tong, objected to the payment, certain members of the Four Families went on the warpath. A banquet costing \$500 was held

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Chief Figures in the War of the Bing Kong and Hop Sing Tong and How It Started Here.

The pen-and-ink sketch shows the spot on Marchesault street where one of three Hop Sing or Four Families men, following three members of the Bing Kong tong, thrust aside four intervening white men and shot down the hereditary enemies, killing two and badly wounding a third. Two of the supposed assailants were arrested and the third is a fugitive.

FEAR VULTURES OF VENGEANCE.

Los Angeles Chinese Shiver With Dread as War of Tong
 Remains Unsettled and Age-Old Blood Feud Decrees
 That the Tally of Deaths Must be Evened Up.

BY OTIS M. WILES.

Vultures of vengeance have been hovering over Chinatown for two weeks. The feud of the tong, centuries old, has been revived by the recent murders of two tong men. Two Chinese of an opposing tong, charged with complicity in the slaying, are to appear in court for their preliminary hearing Wednesday, but the tongman pays little heed to the white man's law. He has a law of his own: if a tongman is slain the score must be balanced by slaying a man of the rival tong. But the present strife is fraught with serious complications. It involves the three dominating tongs of Chinatown—the Bing Kongs, the Hop Sings and the Four Families. Two Bing Kong men are dead and until the peace meetings in San Francisco are closed, their brother tongmen are standing alone. The Bing Kong men were slain by either Four Families or Hop Sing gunmen. The exact facts are for the emissaries of peace to decide. If a decision is reached, then two tongs will array themselves for battle against the third.

WITH THEIR BOOTS ON

Until the peacemakers have spoken, the local members of three tongs are sleeping with their boots on. The storm may break at any time. Chinatown's population is approximately 3200 Chinese. Of this number, about 175 are Bing Kong men, 120 are Hop Sings, and between 200 and 300 are members of the Four Families. The rest belong to none of these tongs. When the storm does break, tempting prizes will be placed on

the heads of leaders of the rival tongs. Quong Wong is president of the local Bing Kongs. At present he is among those absent from Chinatown; Louie Pau, head of the Hop Sings, and Mark Pim Tom, leader of the Four Families tong, are also keeping away.

The tong disturbance broke suddenly upon Chinatown, when Wong Lun, Yee Fat and Wing Sen Wong were shot down by a gunman in August Alley on the night of December 18. Wong Lun and Yee Fat were killed. Wing Sen Wong is a patient at the County Hospital, recovering from bullet wounds in his hip and side. The three men were members of the Bing Kong tong and their assailants were Hop Sing or Four Families men.

CONFLICTING REASONS.

Conflicting reasons for the shooting were given by chiefs of the Bing Kong and Four Families tongs. The Hop Sings, sitting patiently in their headquarters at 520 1/2 North Los Angeles street awaiting the decision of the peace conference in San Francisco, are chuckling to themselves. While the Bing Kongs and the Four Families are throwing mud at each other, the Hop Sings disclaim connection with the shooting of the Bing Kong men.

Quan Oon, he do shootin! He no Hop Sing. He Four Families man," they say.

Quan Oon, they state, was once a Hop Sing man but months ago failed to pay his dues and is now an outlaw member. William Chew and Chin Sing, Quan Oon's companions on the night of the shooting and now under arrest for suspicion of murder,

are Hop Sing men, but the Hop Sings assert that these two Chinese did not do any shooting.

"Lillie Lem Lee makes trouble," say the Four Families tongmen.

Lillie Lem Lee, pretty for a Chinese girl, reaped many covetous glances from the young bloods of Chinatown. Once before, in 1914, while she was a resident of San Francisco's Chinatown, two rival tongmen angling for her love precipitated a tong war there. Several Chinese were killed and one of the tongs spirited her out of San Francisco. She then came to Los Angeles.

LILLIE'S PART.

One of the Four Families' officials, through an interpreter, told of Lillie's part in the recent killing. He says she desired to embark upon a primrose life, but before doing so a Chinese girl must secure fine clothes and jewelry. It is the custom for the girl's sweetheart to provide these. A Bing Kong man furnished the clothes and jewelry and the girl was in debt to him for his kindness. Then came Lew Quan Con, the Hop Sing man. He paid to the Bing Kong man the debt Lillie owed him and he, automatically, became Lillie's sweetheart, eliminating the Bing Kong man.

But the Bing Kong man continued to call on Lillie. Lem Lee Lillie's new sweetheart protested to his tong, but the Hop Sings warned him not to start trouble. According to the Four Families informant, Lew Quan Oon disregarded the word of the Hop Sing organization and the killing followed. The fact that Yee Fat and Wing Sen Wong were mere-

Ten Centuries of Hate Revived When Tong Blood Flows in Marchessault Street Gutters.

CHINATOWN QUAKING AS OLD BLOOD FEUD FLARES.

Threatened Tong War's Roots Lie Deep in Ancient Oriental History and Be- yond Pale of Western Laws.

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them and a gunman was hired \$1000 to kill the first Bing Kong that opportunity afforded. "A Hop Sing gunman was hired the Four Families individuals so in the event that their plans shifted onto the Hop Sings. By naming the woman the Four Families individuals felt they could cast suspicion on Lew Quan. Don and on their organization. The way of the Chinese gunman is not to any particular man, but to shoot anybody who happens to belong to a tong he has a grudge against." But whatever the motive for the shooting, two Bing Kong men were in, and the law of the tong states the score shall be evened.

SEEDS OF DEATH.

For ages the wars of the tong have existed and no law of the white man has yet succeeded in quelling them. They may cease for a period of a few years, but in the vengeful spirit arises and he or she break out afresh. Long before America was discovered, and probably many generations before Indians of the North American continent met in their first tribal wars, seeds of death were sown in China by the tongmen. Then, with the tide of aliens that swamped the shores of this far country during the century, seeds of vengeance were sown across the Pacific to bear their quick harvest.

Tongs are Chinese societies, principally groups of families of the old China, who with formulas of oaths and symbolic rituals, linked themselves together in blood pacts, the heritage to descend to all those who, in the ages to come were to bear the surnames of the amalgamated families.

Such a tong is the Four Families long ago four men loved each other like brothers. They were Lau, Chin, Chung and Chu. They made blood pact and as a result the

to permit the Hop Sings to open a few lottery places in the Bing Kong territory, under the patronage of the Bing Kongs. The lawyer, an agent of the Hop Sings, had promised protection to the Bing Kongs for this privilege. Raids were to be prevented and their cases were to be dismissed in the police courts through the supposed influence of the lawyer with the administration. But when the Bing Kongs presented their conditions to the Hop Sings, the hatchet men of the two tongs began to flock into town.

Leaders of the two tongs were marked for death. Then a series of raids on the Bing Kong dens were launched by the police. The heads of the tongs could not understand why the police should interrupt their peaceful games with the swinging of axes, for they had been promised protection. But they were informed that police protection could not be purchased and they were promised additional destructive raids unless they agreed to peace terms, so the tong war was called off—not abandoned forever, but merely postponed—for the tongs will never cease their warfare.

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WARS NEAR PLAZA.

As long as thirty-one years ago, and that is as far back into Chinatown history as the slant-eyed sages care to go, the Hop Sings and the Bing Kongs were battling in the narrow passageways east of the Plaza. There was a pandemonium of shouts and much scuffling of feet and Fong Lung, a Bing Kong man, was found dead, with a bullet hole through his body.

Thirteen years ago there was another tong war here. Chen Hee, a Bing Kong man, was cornered in Napa Alley and killed, and for this offense, two Hop Sing men were sent to the penitentiary.

According to the Bing Kongs, the shootings are always started by the Hop Sings. They admit that Hop Sings are sometimes slain by the Bing Kongs, but not until after a Bing Kong man is killed by a Hop Sing, they say.

In May, 1912, Chin Loy Hong, a wealthy merchant, was slain and Yee Hop was wounded by Hop Sing highbinders. Both were Bing Kong men. This war had its origin in San Francisco, following the kidnaping of a Chinese slave girl. It shifted to Oakland, where several Chinese were killed, and then the talons of vengeance reached southward to Los Angeles. Chin Loy Hong and Yee Hop had nothing to do with the kidnaping, but they were members of an enemy tong, and so were marked for death. The girl had been sold to a Hop Sing tong man for \$1500 and when her master learned that she had fled with a man of the other tong, he called in his relatives and they ap-

pealed to the enemy tong leaders for help. But the kidnaper's tong refused to make their member give up the girl and the war was on.

THIRTY CHINESE SLAIN.

Before this war was stopped by the high and mighty ones of the Peace Association in San Francisco, more than thirty Chinese were slain in the Coast cities.

Gangs of professional highbinders, paid gunmen who received their money from heavy bounties placed on the heads of marked tongmen, have often been imported into Los Angeles to start tong battles but many have been averted by hurried consultations between the police and the higher and invisible powers of Chinatown.

The dominating faction in Chinatown is the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. When any controversy arises between tongs, the rivals present their cases to the chamber. Presiding over this body is Sen Wing Wo, who represents the financial powers, and his word is law to the Chinese.

American judges do not settle the arguments of the tongs. They may think they do, but they don't. It is the body of weighty men in the Chinese colony that practically rules Chinatown, though no person seems to know whence it gets its powers of government. All serious disputes are settled by this body—even crimes which do not reach the ears of the police. If they decree that the fires of vengeance be quenched, their word is usually obeyed. But if they fail to bring about peace, then the case is transferred to those even higher in power who sit in San Francisco as the Chinese General Peace Council. The decisions of the peace association are as great as the word of their gods.

BLOOD TALLY EVENED.

If a blood tally is opened, then the peace association has no work to do. In April, 1917, Lee Chung was dozing behind a cigar counter in a Chinese clubroom at 323 Marchessault street. The hour was 2 a.m. The front door suddenly

swung open, admitting three men. One snatched a revolver at Lee Chung, who fell to the floor, dead. Hop Sing men killed him.

Chinatown for two weeks shuffled quietly along about its business. Then on the afternoon of April 29 a stranger followed Woo Hung Chung, a merchant, into a small alley. Chung's body was riddled with bullets. The murderer escaped, though 100 inhabitants of Chinatown witnessed the shooting. Had he been captured he probably never would have been convicted, for tongmen never will testify against each other. This is the peculiar feature of tong justice that puts the police in despair. A Bing Kong man may be slain by a Hop Sing man, but on the witness stand the minds of the slain man's friends are a blank slate, thoroughly sponged of all recollection.

But the tally was evened, which was a fulfillment of the law of the tongs. As long, however, as the reckoning of victims shows a balance of deaths in favor of the other tong, there is no stopping the feud.

The score must balance before peace is secure.

The tong method of warfare is uncanny. The gunmen do not stand bravely in the open and fight an even-sided duel. A gunman seldom tracks his quarry alone. More often he obtains the services of two confederates. The trio trail their prey into dark passages and pump lead into the back of the marked man. The gunmen do not run. With the scurrying of scores of Chinese to the scene of the shooting the gunman leisurely leave the crowd and disappear. The gun used in the killing is always "ditched"—tossed carelessly into the gutter.